



ARTIST-LED RESIDENCIES

A REPORT FROM MAKING ROUTES



**BATTERSEA
ARTS CENTRE**



SLG

**BATTERSEA
ARTS CENTRE**



asisplay





CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	p02
2. Overview of Making Routes artist-led residencies	p03 - 05
3. The Making Routes artist cohort	p06 - 09
4. Reflections	p10 - 11
5. Positives	p12 - 14
6. Challenges	p15
7. Conclusion	p16 - 17



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Making Routes is a unique creative partnership between Oasis Play (Oasis), Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) and the South London Gallery (SLG) funded by Spirit of 2012.

This report introduces the Making Routes artist cohort and charts the significant experiences and reflections from the eighteen Making Routes artist-led residencies delivered between July 2016 and October 2017.

The report gives specific attention to moments of learning and new knowledge gained with regards to interdisciplinary working across the disciplines of visual art, performing art and play and highlights the positives and challenges of collaborative practice between disabled and non-disabled children, young people and artists.

2.OVERVIEW OF ARTIST-LED RESIDENCIES

The artist-led residencies were structured around six main components:

1. Cohort residency planning
2. Training and knowledge exchange
3. Residency activity
4. Artist cohort day
5. Artist/producer meetings
6. External evaluation interviews

Cohort residency planning

In June 2016, prior to the delivery of residency activity, the artist cohort was invited to take part in a cohort planning meeting. This event focused on:

- mapping the positive attributes that the artists' felt they could bring to the programme through skills audits and relaxed conversations
- discussion around the aspects of the artists' work that they would like to develop through Making Routes
- conversations around good and bad approaches to evaluation and how to embed evaluation into artist practice
- an open space* discussion to capture the artists' ideas relating to the three core Making Routes outcomes: 'perceptions of disability', 'wellbeing' and 'social connectedness'.

The cohort planning day helped to bring the diverse ideas and approaches of the artists and their disciplines together with the creative vision of the core team. The day also ensured that the artists opinions were listened to and valued from the outset.

*Open Space 'is one way to enable all kinds of people to create inspired meetings and events in which participants create and manage their own agenda of parallel working sessions around a central theme of strategic importance' (openspaceworld.org).

Training and knowledge exchange

In June 2016, prior to the delivery of residency activity, the artist cohort was invited to take part in a day of training and knowledge exchange focusing on inclusive approaches to working with disabled and non-disabled children and young people. The event was delivered by the Making Routes core-team, members of the Oasis Inclusion Project (OIP) and guest speakers from inclusive arts organisations: Touretteshero (touretteshero.com), Heart n Soul (heartnsoul.co.uk) and Access All Areas (accessallareastheatre.org). This event shared different approaches to working inclusively and asked the artists to think about how inclusivity would be embedded in their residency work from the outset of the project.

Residency activity

Between July 2016 and October 2017, the Making Routes artist cohort planned and delivered eighteen artist-led residencies across the three Making Routes organisations – Oasis Play (Oasis), South London Gallery (SLG) and Battersea Arts Centre (BAC). Each of the eight artists developed a residency theme which served as a creative platform on which to develop a series of arts activities, creative encounters and cultural events in collaboration with disabled and non-disabled children and young people. As well as working with collaborators from the three Making Routes organisations, the artists worked with external partners including The George Shearing Centre, Lady Allen Adventure Playground and Michael Tippet School. Each residency was produced by a member of the Making Routes core team.

Artist cohort day

In January 2017, the Making Routes artists were invited to take part in a cohort day. This event allowed artists who had already undertaken a residency to share their experiences and learning with the rest of the group and invited the cohort to discuss the Making Routes project more broadly with the core team.

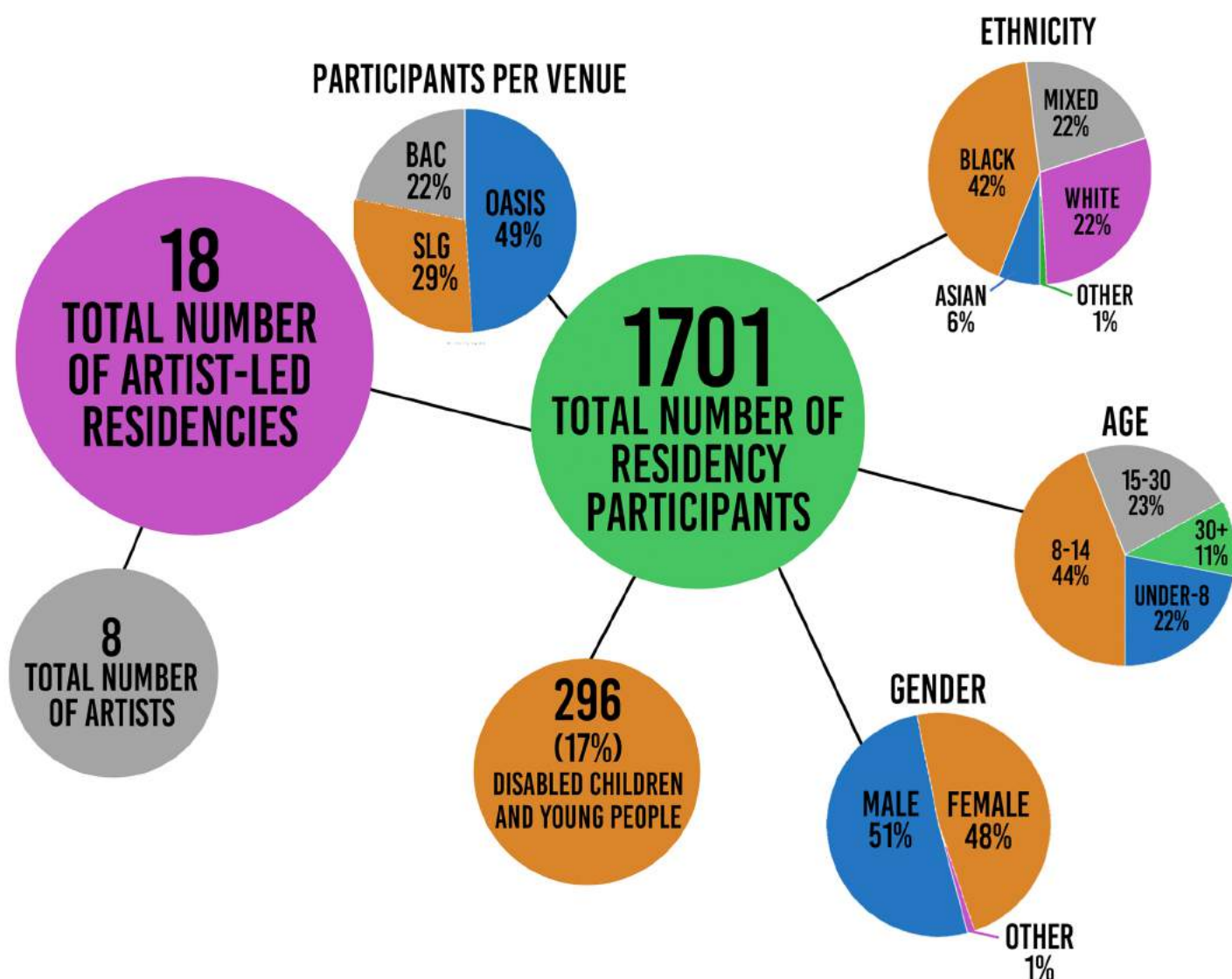
Producer meetings

Throughout each residency Making Routes artists met with a producer from one of the three partner organisations to discuss the progression of their work. An artist/producer checklist was used to guide conversations and planning, focusing on: ideas, timetabling, accessibility, audience, volunteers, promotion, monitoring, evaluation, social media, invoicing and materials.

External evaluation interviews

Artists were invited to discuss their residency activity with the Making Routes external evaluator. These discussions were audio recorded, transcribed and shared with the artist and the Making Routes core team to inform the development of future residency work. In July 2016, the artist cohort was invited to take part in an evaluative conversation as part of Radio 4's listening project. Two of the artists discussed their Making Routes projects in the Listening Project roaming booth and these became part of the British Library's oral history collection.

In total, 1701 children and young people took part in artist-led residency activity - a percentage increase of 30.8% above the original goal of 1300.



2. THE MAKING ROUTES ARTIST COHORT

Below is a brief introduction to the eight Making Routes artists and their residency themes.

Aldean Blair and Heart n Soul

Conrad Murray

Dayo Koleosho & Access All Areas

differentEngine

Joanna Brinton

Jo Paul

Linda Stupart

Sarah Hopfinger

Aldean Blair and Heart n Soul

Artist and pianist Aldean Blair has been with Heart n Soul since 2008. He curates interactive performances with original music and specially created costumes. Heart n Soul is an award-winning creative arts company who believe in the talents and power of people with learning disabilities.

Residency theme: The Xenoverse – a series of epic inclusive installations inviting children and young people to help Captain Aldean Blair rebuild his home in the Xenoverse.



Conrad Murray

Conrad is a London-based performer, facilitator and creative director of the Beatbox Academy at Battersea Arts Centre. His practice fuses his love of hip-hop with the aesthetic of stories and movement.

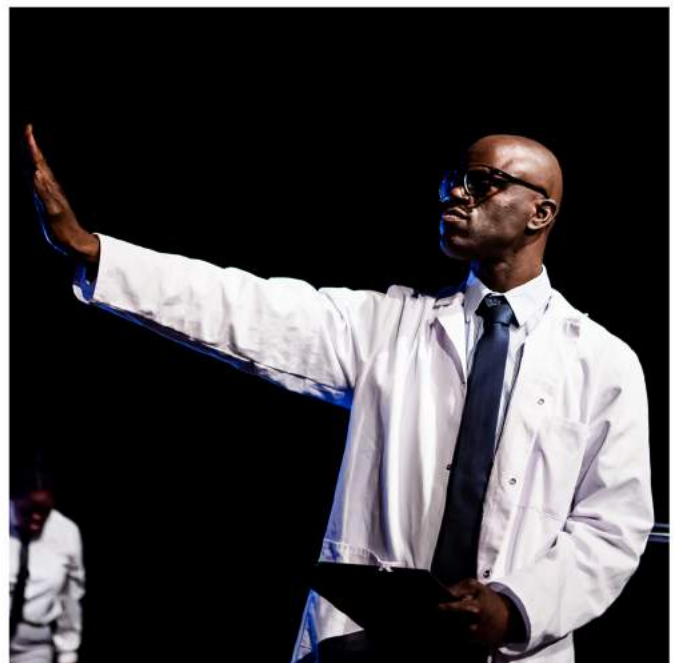
Residency Theme: Beatbox Station – a place where disabled and non-disabled children can learn to loop and create their own music - merging noises, words, sounds and rhythms made by the body.



Dayo Koleosho & Access All Areas

Actor, performance maker and facilitator Dayo Koleosho has worked with Access All Areas for 10 years. Dayo makes performance as a stage actor and on TV. Access All Areas makes urban, disruptive performance by learning disabled and autistic artists.

Residency Theme: Escape Room - Dayo has been trapped! He must navigate a strange travel-themed world to find his freedom pass by completing tasks and working out clues. Can you help him escape the Madhouse?



differenceEngine

differenceEngine creates interactive and immersive theatrical worlds across communities, physical spaces and digital platforms.

Residency theme: The Lost

Cartographers – an immersive play and performative work by a strange and wondrous travelling duo calling themselves 'The Lost Cartographers'. The work invites children and young people to travel with their friends to far off lands, making music, drawing maps and playing together.



Jo Paul

Jo Paul is a London based artist, a scenographer and a tutor. Her work investigates the human image, the space the self and the body inhabit and the memory of that space, the societal perceptions of the body as commodity, figures of worship or loathing and the effect that gender, memory, hope and imaginings have on the self.

Residency Theme: We Are Here – an inclusive exploration of connections to the past, the present, the future, each other and ourselves.



Joanna Brinton

Joanna Brinton works with print, sculpture and people as part of a research-based practice that takes historical objects or events as a lens for examining the present day.

Residency theme: Nonsense! - playing with words and language, sounds and movements to tell stories and hide meanings. Building banners to gather under, jump through and hide behind. In this world words become objects that flip and flop to and fro, day by day.



Linda Stupart

Linda is an artist, writer, and educator from Cape Town. Their writing and visual practice enacts a non-division between writing and making; experimenting with intimacy, embodied critique and realisms without representation.

Residency theme: Reimagining - an opportunity to explore and reimagine gender and bodies. Casting spells, queering ideas of 'normal' dress and examining how art can help us to think differently about our own bodies and the bodies of others



Sarah Hopfinger

Sarah is a Glasgow-based director, researcher and performer. Her practice sits between choreography, live art and contemporary performance. Her performances emerge through the dynamics, energies and friendships that evolve between the people she works with.

Residency theme: Wild Our Way – games, movement, dance, play fighting, sound and photography act as tools to explore different perspectives on wildness and the places where people feel wild.





3. REFLECTIONS

Communication between artists

Several of the artists commented that they would have liked to have been invited to see other artist's residency work. Though certain residency invitations and event flyers were circulated via the core-team to the cohort, a shared calendar or similar mechanism through which the artists could communicate would have increased the opportunity to share residency activities and events within the group.

'It would have been good to have more opportunities to talk and reflect with the other artists. When we did meet, it was great and really valuable. I think we have loads to learn from each other as a strong bunch of artists. If we had more specific opportunities for reflection, discussion and even collaboration, I think all of our work and artistic development would have benefited'.

(Making Routes artist)

Promoting and documenting residency activity

Each artist was invited to upload documentation, outputs and creative reflections from their residencies to the Making Routes Tumblr page (makingroutes.tumblr.com). This was done on a residency-by-residency basis and therefore became a relatively closed space with content being posted at irregular intervals between residencies. Several of the artists commented that they would ideally have liked the page to be a more open platform and for all the cohort to have consistent access to the Tumblr so they could co-design the site directly whenever they liked.

Developing artist practice

Making Routes aimed to create opportunities for artists to develop their practice, expand their ideas and approaches to working collaboratively with disabled and non-disabled children and young people and to work in partnership with different cultural institutions. Many of the residencies showed evidence of these aims being realised. Making Routes would have benefited from working with the artist cohort to make clear distinctions between artist-focused and child/young person-focused moments of residency activity from the outset.

Integrating evaluation outcomes

Making Routes had several broad aims including 'to help improve perceptions of disability amongst disabled and non-disabled children, young people and adults' and 'to opens up connections and understanding between local arts/play organisations and local disabled and non-disabled people' several artists commented that it would have been useful to focus specific elements of their residency work towards specific goals, this would have simplified the process of tracking the artistic progression of each residency against the Making Routes evaluation framework.

'I HAVE PUSHED MY ART FORWARD CONCEPTUALLY AND COLLABORATED WITH SOME GREAT PEROPLE'

'I GAINED A FELT UNDERSTANDING THAT INCLUSIVENESS IS NOT JUST ABOUT INCLUDING DIVERSE PEOPLE, BUT IT IS ALSO ABOUT THE INCLUSION OF DIVERSE PARTS OF OURSELVES. I EXPERIENCED HOW THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF WHO WE ARE, DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF SEEING AND BEING IN THE WORLD CAN MEET, CONNECT AND CREATE SOMETHING NEW FOR US ALL'

(MAKING ROUTES ARTISTS)

'SOMETIMES THINGS GOT HAZY AS TO WHETHER THE FOCUS OF THE RESIDENCIES WAS ON DEVELOPING THE ARTISTS' PRACTICE, OR ON CREATING A GREAT EXPERIENCE FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE. THE BEST RESIDENCIES ACCOMPLISHED BOTH BUT SOMETIMES THIS FELT LIKE A BIT OF A BALANCING ACT'

(VICTORIA BRIGGS, SENIOR PRODUCER - BAC)



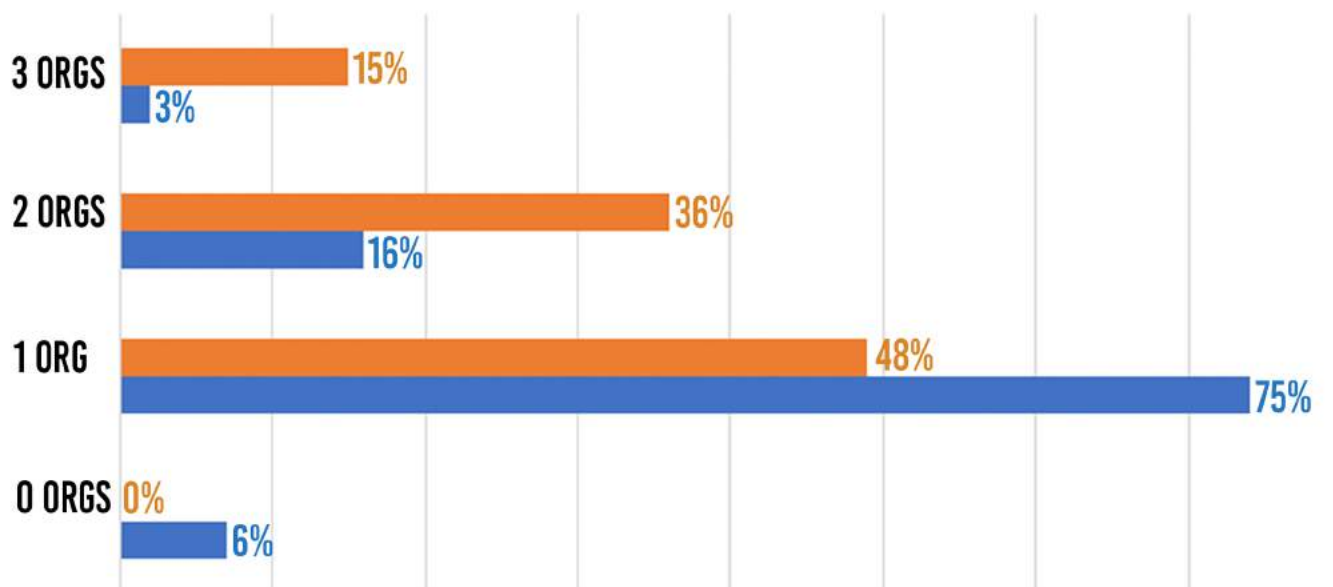
4. POSITIVES

Connecting people to provision

Making Routes aimed to 'connect people to, and make them aware of, cultural opportunities and play provision'. Using start and end of participation surveys people were asked 'How many of the Making Routes organisations have you visited before this project?' and 'How many of the Making Routes organisations have visited as part of Making Routes?' the results are shown below.

HOW MANY OF THE MAKING ROUTES ORGANISATIONS HAVE YOU VISITED BEFORE THIS PROJECT?

SAMPLE SIZE - 65



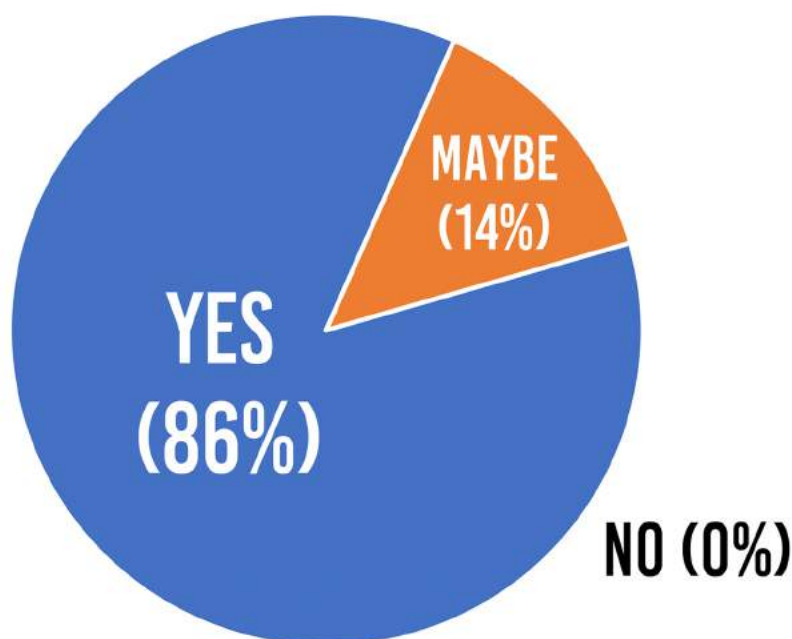
HOW MANY OF THE MAKING ROUTES ORGANISATIONS HAVE YOU VISITED AS PART OF THE PROJECT?

SAMPLE SIZE - 33

The decrease in beneficiaries who had visited zero or one organisation and the increase in beneficiaries who had visited two or three of the organisations is an indicator of the success Making Routes has had in connecting people to cultural/play provisions.

Using the end of participation surveys, seventy-nine people were asked: 'Will you continue to get involved in these kinds of activities in your area?' the results are shown below.

WILL YOU CONTINUE TO GET INVOLVED IN THESE KINDS OF ACTIVITIES IN YOUR AREA?



'WHEN THE RESIDENCIES WORKED BEST WAS WHEN THE ARTISTS WERE ABLE TO BE FLEXIBLE AND CHANGE THEIR PRACTICE ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE GROUP, THIS WAS SOMETIMES REALLY SPECIAL TO WITNESS'.

(Victoria Briggs, Senior producer, BAC)

Flexibility

The Making Routes artists embedded different forms of flexibility into their residencies throughout the programme. This included: using a variety of materials to meet different sensory needs and preferences, offering activities with short and long time commitments (one minute to one day) and curating different forms of creative text and non-text based invitations and explanations of residency activities. Embedding these forms of flexibility in the delivery of activities invited collaborators to take part in a way that suited them, this was a key component in the design of equitable experiences that were available to disabled and non-disabled children and young people across a broad spectrum of age.

Exploring big through small

All the residencies were guided by strong conceptual, political and creative themes. The artist cohort worked with the core team to divide large ideas up into small pieces to make them accessible to the broad range of disabled and non-disabled children and young people that they were working with.

‘CONCEPTUALLY I HAD TO STRIP THINGS DOWN TO SMALLER IDEAS THAT WERE EASY TO EXPLORE BY ALL, IT MEANT I HAD TO BECOME MORE PLAYFUL AND FLEXIBLE IN THAT EXPLORATION’

(Making Routes artist)

‘I WAS REALLY IMPRESSED TODAY WITH HOW THE ARTIST USED BITE-SIZED CREATIVE TASKS AND PLAY TO HAVE OPEN AND HONEST CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN ABOUT COMPLICATED IDEAS LIKE NON-BINARY GENDER AND INCLUSIVITY’

(Playworker, Oasis)

Disabled artists and volunteers acting as positive creative role models

‘FOR ME THE MOST BRILLIANT PART OF MAKING ROUTES WAS NOT ONLY SEEING DISABLED CHILDREN BEING FULLY SUPPORTED TO TAKE PART IN ALL THE ACTIVITIES, BUT ALSO HAVING DISABLED PEOPLE RUNNING THE SESSIONS. I KNOW THE YOUNG PEOPLE AT OASIS WILL BE INSPIRED BY SEEING DISABLED ADULTS TAKING ON INTERESTING AND CREATIVE JOBS’

(Inclusive Playworker, Oasis)

positives . . .

6. CHALLENGES

Time

The Making Routes core team were responsible for delivering numerous elements of the project simultaneously. This included: producing artist-led residencies, planning and delivering a twelve-month young people's volunteer programme, undertaking outreach for Making Routes, monitoring and evaluating all Making Routes activity and programming, commissioning and curating a large inclusive festival. Particularly towards the end of Making Routes when planning for the festival was being undertaken, the time available to the core team to work closely with the artists in the delivery of residency activity was stretched.

'I think it's fair to acknowledge that the staff time budgeted for within the project was less than what was invested in it from all three organisations. It's very difficult to manage a project to the scale of Making Routes on a one day a week post'.

(Sarah Coffils, Head of Education - South London Gallery)

Making Routes might have benefitted from formally delegating different aspects of the project (such as volunteer coordination and partner outreach) to different members of the team.

Changes in core team

'I sometimes felt that the change of team over the project was difficult to navigate and resulted in me feeling a little unsure of who to talk to if I needed support or just to chat about my ideas'.

(Making Routes artist)

Throughout Making Routes each of the three organisations saw changes to the core team delivering the project. At times this made it difficult to embed the programme within the wider activity of the organisations and made communication and management of the artist cohort unclear.



7. CONCLUSION

Below are seven key principles that Making Routes would suggest when designing an inclusive artist-led residency: visibility, time, trust, multi-sensory, collaboration, evaluation and creativity.

1. Visibility of difference is essential in creating a project that is open, accessible and representative of society. Making Routes ensured that disabled people were visible and valued by engaging disabled people as the artists, collaborators and evaluators responsible for the progression of the project. It is important to acknowledge the multiple barriers that disabled people (as well as other groups) face in accessing opportunities in the arts and cultural sector and society as a whole. The Making Routes artist-led residencies increased the opportunity for diverse groups of people to work together to forge shared experiences in which everyone is welcome. Artist-led activity, creativity and co-creation have a vital role to play in challenging binary representations of art as adult, white, non-disabled and male.

2. Time is crucial in the design of experiences that are open and equitable to diverse groups of people. Making Routes found that if the delivery time of a residency activity was short, then a longer period of planning was necessary. If the delivery time of a residency activity was long, then a shorter period of planning was appropriate.

3. Trust is essential when working with children, young people and partner organisations. It can take a long time for individuals and organisations to be confident that a project is worth being involved in and that it will be attentive to individual needs and preferences. Making Routes hosted several 'ice-breaker' sessions at partner organisations venues (keeping things on their terms and avoiding travel complications) as well as inviting potential collaborators to visit the sites prior to residency activity. The core team also mapped collaborator interests and needs using creative activities and workshops in order to tailor residency activities around collaborating groups.

4. Multi-sensory is key if you want to engage diverse groups of collaborators equitably. Where possible, offer information in different formats (easy-read, large-format, audio flyer, non-text/picture supported). Your residency collaborators are likely to reflect the formats that your invitations and creative calls to action are offered in.

5. Collaboration can happen across all stages of a project. Making Routes aimed to work closely with disabled and non-disabled children and young people from discovering, defining and developing to delivering and evaluating the project.

6. Evaluation can be an exciting and creative process and shouldn't be left to 'experts' or completed solely at the end of a project. Making Routes found that taking a shared and creative approach to collecting feedback and evaluation throughout the artist-led residencies enabled the project to position the experiences of the people involved as a catalyst in the development of future activities and events. Different feedback was collected from children when they were asked questions by an adult or another child. Think carefully about who is asking the questions and how, when and where the questions are asked.

7. Creativity and artist-led activity is a great way to have open and honest conversations with people about unknown, challenging or potentially upsetting ideas and to share different perspectives that afford more diverse ways of thinking within the arts and cultural sector. Whenever the opportunity for people (in particular children and young people) to engage creatively with difference and diversity is increased, the possibility of a more connected and inclusive society is established.



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**WRITTEN BY WILL RENEL
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